

Richard Yoakley Alternative School, Knox County



The Richard Yoakley Alternative School (RYS), in partnership with students, families, and base schools, works to provide a behavioral, educational foundation that allows students the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. The school serves students in grades 6–12 and seeks to provide a rigorous academic learning environment with a focus on daily social and emotional learning. With 25 certified and 25 classified staff, every student at RYS

receives the structure and support necessary to ensure the appropriate academic and behavioral intervention is implemented to ensure success.

RYS staff includes an instructional coach, transition coordinator, restorative interventionist, school psychologist, social worker, and school counselor. The instructional coach leads weekly professional learning communities (PLCs) and provides academic support and coaching. The transition coordinator monitors student progress and tracks student behavior/interventions at their base school when they return. The restorative interventionist conducts daily/weekly restorative circles with students/staff to promote social development and build supportive relationships. The social worker tracks student attendance and conducts home visits to meet the needs of students and families. And, the school psychologist and school counselor play pivotal roles in addressing the social and emotional needs of students that allows the school to teach the whole child.

Students receive standards-based instruction on core curriculum as well as career and technical education (CTE) offerings, and daily social skills lessons. RYS follows a schoolwide behavior management system that allows them opportunities to grow and reflect. Teachers work an extended contract to allow for professional development and have common planning time for collaboration and weekly PLCs. Additionally, RYS is one of nine Knox County Schools to pilot the TIGER evaluation model for the 2017–18 school year.

Fall 2017, RYS established the first community PTSA in an alternative program in the state of Tennessee. RYS is a proud member of the North Knoxville Business and Professionals Association which has enabled them to create strong partnerships with the community. Examples of community partners include the Metro Drug Coalition and the YWCA.

Richard Yoakley is led by principal, Seth Smith,
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G.W. Carver College & Career Academy, Shelby County

G. W. Carver College & Career Academy (GWCCA) – Great Staff! Great Students! Great Expectations! At G.W. Carver, the administrators, faculty, and staff have shifted the mind set of what a traditional alternative school should look like and transformed it with a college and career focus. Scholars at

the academy are required to take an exclusively designed academic counseling course created by the teachers at GWCCA. In this course students receive exposure to colleges, the military, community service, and various careers. Students participate in a college fair, visit colleges, and meet with recruiters from such colleges as Christian Brothers University, LeMoyne-Owen College, Tennessee State University, and the University of Memphis. Students who desire a non-traditional education have a special session with a recruiter from The College of Art to explore other career options.

Instructors at the academy realize that college may not be for everyone; however, being successful in life is. Students learn about technical certification programs through job fairs hosted by the WIN program and attend the Entrepreneur Series 101/Careers in Action seminar where they meet with entrepreneurs such as Nikki Chanel, celebrity make-up artist and owner of The Facegirl, an entrepreneur mentoring program, as well as Desmond Robinson of D. Arthur Catering service, and former chef for NBA player Thaddeus Young.

Students that aspire to be in the military take the armed services vocational aptitude battery (ASVAB) test and meet with Army and U.S. Navy recruiters to discuss requirements for joining. The academic counseling class also teaches students the importance of networking through community service. Scholars participate in community service at facilities like the St. Jude Garden Project, acted as greeters for the Wiley College concert, and assisted at the Food Bank.

In addition to the academic counseling class program, other programs like DECA, Work Based Learning, Carver Ambassadors, and Project STAND all share the school's goal of exposing all GWCCA students to college and career opportunities. In particular, the Carver Ambassadors program has helped students receive employment at local businesses and allowed students to participate in service learning projects at local community gardens, and the Civil Rights Museum. The Ambassadors also have motivational speakers from the Memphis community such as judges, law enforcement, and the entertainment industry. Project STAND has

aided students in earning National Career Readiness Certifications, obtaining career readiness skills, and Technical Employment Certifications. Through Project Stand students visit technical education schools such as Lincoln Tech, Rankin Tech, Nissan Tech, and TCAT.

These programs, along with the academic counseling course, serves as the successful core of GWCCA's academic, college, and career focus for all students.

The principal for G.W. Carver College & Career Academy is Dr. James Suggs, suggsj@scsk12.org.

Jefferson Academy, Jefferson County



In June 2009, Jefferson County embarked on the task of creating a new alternative school. The first year of operation the alternative school was given the name A.C.E. and served only students remanded from Jefferson County's middle school. Beginning in 2010, the school's name was changed to Jefferson Academy and moved to its current permanent location. The Academy serves students in grades 6–12 and, occasionally, elementary school students.

Jefferson Academy provides students temporary placements for behavior management with a focus on academic success. The academy provides a safe and structured learning environment that cultivates self-respect and self-discipline. The goal is for the student to successfully complete the program and return to, and be successful, in their home school.

Jefferson Academy is a smaller program and accommodates up to 60 students at a time. On average, 160 students attend during the course of a year. Although a smaller school, their student population is reflective of student populations in larger, more diverse schools. A recent survey revealed that 29% of students had three or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Ninety percent of students are on free or reduced lunch and only 7.7% of students live with their biological parents.

Students are placed at Jefferson Academy for transition, behavior, and zero tolerance. The process for student placement at Jefferson Academy is structured, beginning with a pre-intake prior to placement. Once

placed, a transition and exit plan are developed to help the student understand expectations and set goals.

A typical day at Jefferson Academy has students rotating to receive instruction in four core subjects aligned with state standards and modified to meet their individual needs. Classrooms are blended learning environments that include direct instruction, computer-based curriculum, and hands on activities for all learning styles. Data collection is an integral component of the academy. Program data, to include academics, behavior, and attendance, is collected for continuous program improvement. Professional growth is a priority for staff with participation in various professional development opportunities to include the Tennessee Alternative Education Association conference.

To foster individual growth and community involvement, students participate in quarterly service learning projects that range from reading to younger students to packing food boxes for those in need. College and career planning is offered through career exploration, guest speakers, hands on experiences, college and career week, and job shadowing. In addition, Jefferson Academy offers students behavioral health services from a licensed school-based mental health therapist one day a week.

Jefferson Academy is privileged to be supported by a strong advisory board comprised of representatives from Carson Newman University, parents, community leaders, and students. The academy has gained the respect of parents, colleagues, and the community, as well as recognition from Tennessee Behavior Supports Project from the University of Tennessee as an RTI²-B Model Demonstration School.

In their brief time as a school, Jefferson Academy has embraced the challenges set before them with the goal to meet students where they are and to support them to be successful.

The principal for Jefferson Academy is Garry Jett, gjett@jcboe.net.